

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are currently pending in this application. In an Office Action dated 24 January 2006, all pending claims are rejected on prior art grounds. Additionally, the specification is objected to due to the presence of claim numbers.

In reply, Applicant submits the present Amendment and Remarks which overcome the outstanding rejections and objections. The various issues raised by the Examiner in the Action are now addressed in turn.

The disclosure is objected to due to the presence of claim numbers at pages 3-10 of the specification. Herein the specification is amended to remove the claim numbers. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 14, 15, and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,765,934 to Okamori as combined with U.S. Patent No. 5,053,765 to Sonehara.

Turning first to independent claim 1, Applicant submits that the relied-upon references fail to teach or suggest all of the limitations of the claim and a thus *prima facie* obviousness does not exist. Claim 1 recites an illumination unit for point illumination of a medium comprising, inter alia, “a plurality of light emitters comprised of light guides...[and] a plurality of electrically controlled light valves, *each of at least two of the light emitters being arranged to illuminate a plurality of light valves.*” (Emphasis added.)

Applicant respectfully submits that at least this feature of the invention is simply not found in the relied-upon references.

That is, neither Okamori nor Sonehara teach or even suggest light emitters comprised of light guides arranged such that each of at least two light emitters illuminates a plurality of light valves, as claimed. Instead, the references concern light guide arrangements with a one-to-one relationship between light emitters and light valves. As discussed extensively in this prosecution file, this is not analogous to Applicant's invention.

In the Office Action date 03 October 2002, the Examiner relied upon U.S. Patent No. 5,428,366 to Eichenlaub in rejecting the claims under §103 on obviousness grounds. However, as set forth in detail in Applicant's Reply of 02 April 2003, Eichenlaub only discloses a one-to-one direct relationship between light emitters and light valves, contrary to Applicant's invention. Eichenlaub has since been withdrawn. Similarly, in the Office Action dated 03 June 2005, the Examiner relied upon U.S. Patent No. 5,608,833 to Au in rejecting the claims on obviousness grounds. However, as described in detail in Applicant's Reply of 05 December 2005, Au only discloses a one-to-one relationship between light emitters and light valves. Au has since been withdrawn.

Now, the Examiner cites Okamori which, like references prior, only teaches a one-to-one relationship between light emitters and light valves. The Examiner goes so far as to describe this one-to-one relationship at the bottom of page 2 of the Action: "...Okamori discloses an illumination unit for point illumination of a medium comprising a plurality of light emitters (216b-216e) comprised of light guides...arranged to illuminate an

illumination face...via a light valve arrangement (light valves 61-64), each of at least two of the light emitters being arranged to illuminate a light valve arrangement (e.g., light guide 216b is arranged to illuminate light valve 61, light guide 216c is arranged to illuminate light valve 62).” It is indeed true that the element 216b is arranged to illuminate the valve 61 and the element 216c is arranged to illuminate light valve 62. In fact, this is the same one-to-one type (light guide to light valve) arrangement which the Examiner discovered in the previously cited, and since overcome, Eichenlaub and Au references. However, Applicant’s claim 1 recites “each of at least two of the light emitters being arranged to illuminate a plurality of light valves.” (Emphasis added.) This limitation is simply not accounted for in the outstanding rejection.

The Examiner refers to U.S. Patent No. 5,053,765 to Sonehara for a teaching of a plurality of electrically controlled light valves. See, Office Action, page 3. However, Sonehara does not disclose a plurality of light emitters comprised of light guides where each of at least two of the light emitters is arranged to illuminate a plurality of light valves, as required by Applicant’s claim 1. Sonehara discloses a “one-to-one” relationship similar to that presented in Okamori: “Each light guide member defines one picture element at its proximate or distal end.” Col. 4, lines 15-20. This one-to-one relationship is further evident in Figures 7 and 8 (relied upon by the Examiner) in that the optical fibers 803 are aligned with a single electrode 806.

Accordingly, the above-discussed limitation of claim 1 is not taught or suggested by Okamori nor Sonehara; thus prima facie obviousness does not exist.

Moreover, even if Sonehara did disclose this limitation of Applicant's claim 1, there is no suggestion or motivation in the references or elsewhere in the knowledge available in the art which would have induced one of skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to modify the references as proposed by the Examiner. In the Office Action, the Examiner states that the proposed modification would have been obvious "so as to provide an improved light guide type display device which provides a uniform and high quality display..." Office Action, page 3. In support of this statement, the Examiner cites an object of the Sonehara invention, "...to provide a improved light guide type display apparatus which provides a uniform and high quality display." Col. 2, lines 25-27. However, the reference accomplishes this by utilizing a plurality of optical fibers extending from a light source directly to a light shutter. Col. 1, lines 28-47. Thus, from the disclosure of Sonehara, one of skill in the art would perhaps add more light sources, more optical fibers, and more correspondingly light valves in order to increase uniformity and display quality. However, the disclosure of Sonehara would not entice one to stray from the "one-to-one" arrangement of Okamori toward the "one-to-plurality" arrangement of Applicant's claim 1. Thus here again, prima facie obviousness is not found.

For at least the reasons set forth herein, claim 1 is non-obvious with respect to the Okamori and Sonehara references; reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding §103 rejection is respectfully requested. Claim 1 is not further objected or rejected and is thus allowable to Applicant.

Independent claim 20 is also rejected as being obvious in view of Okamori and Sonehara. However, this claim recites a method of point illumination of a medium

comprising, inter alia, “illuminating a plurality of light valves with each of at least two of the light emitters.” This limitation is similar to that discussed above with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above concerning claim 1, Applicant submits that claim 20 is non-obvious; reconsideration and withdrawal of the relevant §103 rejection is requested.

The remaining claims 2-19, 21 and 22 are rejected as being obvious over various combinations of Okamori and Sonehara as combined with certain other references. However, these claims variously depend from allowable claims 1 and 20 and are thus correspondingly allowable. Moreover, Applicant notes that the additional references relied-upon in rejecting these claims do not overcome the deficiencies of Okamori and Sonehara. For at least these reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the respective §103 rejections of claims 2-19, 21, and 22 is requested.

Applicant respectfully submits that the comments provided herein overcome the present obviousness rejections and that the application is now in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of all rejections and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.


The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant’s attorneys at the below-indicated telephone number regarding this Reply or otherwise concerning the present application.

Applicant hereby petitions for any necessary extension of time under 37 C.F.R.
§1.136(a) and §1.136(b) required for consideration and entry of the present Reply.

Please charge any required fees for this Reply, or otherwise concerning the present
application, to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by Applicant's attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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